

Community homeless without Centre - JCA

By PAT WATSON

The Black and Caribbean community without its own community centre, is like an individual who is homeless, Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA) president, Herman Stewart, says.

"We need to have a roof over our heads collectively," he told *Share* in a briefing update on the organization's current fundraising efforts to complete the refurbishing of its new building in North York.

After going through a bitter, prolonged and frustrating battle to win rezoning for their building on Arrow Road in the Jane St./Finch Ave./Weston Rd. area, the non-profit organization now faces the challenge of raising the required funds to renovate the former warehouse. Plans for the 24,000 sq. ft. building include a gymnasium, resource centre, computer training centre, meeting rooms for academic upgrading and a banquet facility capable of

seating 600.

"We received a lot of support from the community to get our rezoning, for which we are grateful," said Stewart. "Now we need that kind of support to go the rest of the way."

The cost of the building project was estimated at \$770,000 in October 1997.

"We approached the bank with an estimate of the cost...to renovate. In order for them to help with a construction loan we have to come up with \$160,000. So far we have \$135,000," Stewart added.

The JCA is currently selling raffle tickets to raise funds for the planned renovations, but sales are slow. Of some 30,000 tickets printed, only 4,000 have been sold so far, although ticket distribution and sales began in May for the draw which will be held on August 29.

The first prize in the raffle is a fully

See CENTRE page 9